

Remarks to the National Association of Home Builders

May 18, 1992

Thank you very much for that welcome, and welcome to the South Lawn of the White House. May I salute the national directors, the homebuilders, and the many, many friends that are here. I also want to single out two members of our Cabinet, Secretary Brady and then one you know so well because you've dealt with him a lot, Secretary Jack Kemp, who's out there doing an awful lot in the housing field.

Welcome to the people's house. Some of you may know this is like a museum, well over a million people going through every year. I don't know how many are going through right this minute, but I'm sure they're going to think we're having a yard sale out here when they see all of this stuff. *[Laughter]*

But we're here to mark a special birthday. I heard a little earlier from the leadership about this 50th anniversary of the Home Builders. I want to salute a special team of them, the leaders, with whom I just met in the Rose Garden. First, of course, Jay Buchert, who has done an outstanding job for this organization, outstanding, and then Roger Glunt and Tommy Thompson and Jim Irvine and Mark Tipton, Bob Bannister, and of course, Kent Colton. I want to thank you at the beginning of these brief remarks for your support. Even more, we Bushes are grateful for the friendships we have of those in the Home Builders.

Millie was a little disappointed. She thought she was going to get a new dog house here. We came and checked it out this morning. *[Laughter]*

But I do believe that Barbara and our kids believe in these same values that you all have: community, country, respect, responsibility, family, jobs, peace. We know we put America first when we put America's families first, and for 50 years, that's what the Home Builders have been doing. You're helping people fulfill the American dream and enlarge the American pie. When the Home Builders were founded, the NAHB, almost one-half of the Nation lived in sub-standard housing, and only four in ten owned their own homes. Today, more than

70 million new homes and apartment units later, two in three households own their own home. That is dramatic progress, but we're not done yet.

For that, I salute you. Once again, you're helping our economy work so that America can get back to work. And yes, we have had some tough times in this country. But consider this: 264,000 housing starts in the first 3 months of this year; a 2-percent GDP growth in the first quarter, more than a quarter of that resulting from residential construction. The old adage is coming true: As housing goes, so goes the economy.

Your industry employs more than 6 million Americans. More and more, they're helping other Americans turn recession into recovery. I speak here as a participant, not a bystander. From my Texas business days I know what it means to meet a payroll and try to balance a budget and help people put food on the table. Like you, I know that strong housing can help a strong economy. I know how that helps Americans worrying about providing for their families, meeting the challenges of paying their bills, buying that home, and setting aside for retirement.

That's why, in my State of the Union Message, I announced a program for economic growth. I called for penalty-free withdrawal from IRA's for the purchase of a first home; changes in the passive-loss tax rules to spur the real estate and housing development; an extension of mortgage revenue bonds and the low-income housing tax credit. And yes, I called for a job-generating cut in the tax on capital gains. Here's the one I feel would really also help this economy and help it fast, a proposal that we've made and that I'm proud of, a \$5,000 tax credit for first-time homebuyers. We need this credit to keep the housing market on the mend, helping people like you sell and build homes. And here's why: \$5,000 could pay 7 months of mortgage payments on the average American home. According to your own figures, these housing initiatives would mean 415,000 new construction industry

jobs and \$20 billion in new economic activity. This is just one more way that your slogan, "Housing equals jobs," can be realized. I challenged the Congress again today to pass these growth initiatives.

Parenthetically speaking, to discipline both the executive branch and the legislative branch, we need to get moving on that balanced budget amendment. I really believe the time for that has come.

Some in Congress haven't gotten the message yet. But I believe, and I think Jack and Nick Brady would agree with me, the time is right for some of these new ideas, ideas that we've been proposing but that haven't been tried. I think the American people want to see us take some action and get something new done. So I'm optimistic that we can move forward now in the Congress in a way that we haven't been able to in the past.

This year, the Home Builders ran an ad in the Washington Post. And the headline was marvelous, if you haven't seen it. The headline read: "Earth to Congress: Enough is enough." I don't believe anybody could have said it any better than that.

Well, you've heard the definition of a contractor: A gambler who never gets to shuffle, cut, or deal. [Laughter] We have to make it easier to deal, sell, hire, invest. So we're going to continue to sound that message that sound banks should make sound loans. The bankers should also work with the borrowers experiencing temporary difficulties from the remnants of the recession.

For our part, we have been working with the Federal Reserve to keep these interest rates low, and we've been fighting for commonsense regulation, not overregulation, of banks and thrifts. And we are going to keep on that fight. We have made over 30 specific regulatory policy changes, many, frankly, with the help from your leadership, to enhance the ability of banks and thrifts to raise new capital, to make new loans, and then to work with troubled borrowers. Nick Brady, Treasury Secretary, and I are going to work to be sure that these measures are carried out.

Next, we're going to push hard for the HOPE initiative, requesting \$1 billion in funding for fiscal '93 and a key part of our plan for a new America to bring opportunity

to our inner cities. Now, Jack Kemp knows how HOPE can give poor families a stake in their communities. And his message is beginning to get through up there in the United States Congress. Bottom line: HOPE will turn housing into homes.

HOPE is only one part, actually, of our six-point plan for a new America which will use opportunity, not bureaucracy, to combat poverty and inequality. And the plan also includes our "Weed and Seed" initiative, it's an anticrime initiative; enterprise zones; education reform; welfare reform; and also a strong jobs program for city youth. This plan makes a promising start. We are going to do our level-best to get it passed.

And yes, I will continue to push for what we mentioned a minute ago, regulatory reform, because I want Government to help, not hurt, the ability of private enterprise to expand and to create jobs. So I've extended for another 120 days the blanket moratorium on Federal regulation. Jay puts it this way, your president: "Let builders build." I know he agrees that we need policies that also let buyers buy, and that's what part of this is all about.

I wish everyone understood this concept. On the other hand, you know what it takes; it takes more than bricks and lumber and mortar to build a home. It takes heart. It takes skill. And it takes dreams. You know that owning a home helps America, makes it better, more caring. You show this in your Homes Across America program, where NAHB members build and renovate homes for the needy. So far I am told that this program has housed more than 600 families, and with us today is one of them, Gerald and Angela Williams and their four children, sitting right over here in the front row, Murria, Charlease, Gerald, and Latoya.

They moved into their new home in Jacksonville on Mothers' Day. And the Williams' home was built by the builders of the Jacksonville association of the NAHB and Habitat for Humanity. I salute them and also salute those who made it possible and also salute the Williams family.

You show how the dream of homeownership keeps the American dream alive. And that dream seemed elusive half a century

ago, but you right here, all of you, have aided it and nurtured it as a parent does a child. And for that, we are all very, very grateful to you.

We salute you on behalf of each American. On this special anniversary, for those who have done so much, we say thank you from a grateful country. May God bless you all. And may God bless the United States of America.

Thank you all very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to association officers Jay Buchert, president; Roger Glunt, first vice president; Tommy Thompson, vice president and treasurer; Jim Irvine, vice president and secretary; Mark E. Tipton, immediate past president; Robert D. Banister, senior staff vice president; and Kent Colton, executive vice president.

Appointment of John A. Cline as Special Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs

May 18, 1992

The President today announced the appointment of John A. Cline as Special Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs.

Since January 1991, Mr. Cline has served as Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs at the Department of Transportation. Prior to this, Mr. Cline served as the Associate Administrator for Budget and Policy at the Federal Transit Administration, an agency of the Department of Transportation, 1989–91. Mr. Cline also served on the Secretary of Transportation's team to

formulate a national transportation policy, which the President announced in March 1990. Prior to this, Mr. Cline served as vice president for management and labor relations for National Transit Services, Inc., a Chicago-based national transportation management firm.

Mr. Cline graduated from Northern Illinois University in 1981. He was born November 25, 1959, in Chicago, IL. Mr. Cline lives in Arlington, VA, with his wife, Krista L. Edwards, and their infant daughter.

Nomination of Gregory F. Chapados To Be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce

May 18, 1992

The President today announced his intention to nominate Gregory F. Chapados, of Alaska, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information. He would succeed Janice Obuchowski.

Since 1986, Mr. Chapados has served as chief of staff to Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) in Washington, DC. Prior to this, he

served as a legislative assistant to Senator Stevens, 1983–86.

Mr. Chapados graduated from Harvard College (B.A., 1979) and Harvard Law School (J.D., 1983). He was born May 8, 1957, in Fairbanks, AK. Mr. Chapados resides in Washington, DC.